



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

W A S H I N G T O N , D C

SCOTT A. BASS
PROVOST

MEMORANDUM May 26, 2009

TO: The University Community
FROM: Scott A. Bass, Provost
SUBJECT: Bridges to Collaboration

One of the most frequently discussed topics at this year's Faculty Summit concerned the ability of faculty to teach and work with colleagues across existing college/school/departmental units. Faculty identified allocation of instructional credit, barriers across the units, absence of incentives, and difficulty in obtaining multiple course evaluation forms for a single course as problems preventing faculty from team teaching courses.

In consideration of these problems, the Office of the Provost is implementing *Bridges to Collaboration*, a one-semester pilot program scheduled for Spring 2010 aimed at facilitating cross-unit instruction. Faculty may begin applying for the program on July 1, 2009. Final applications are due on August 15, 2009.

To support this pilot, the Office of the Provost has earmarked \$35,000, of which ten awards of \$3,500 each will be made available campus-wide as replacement resources to contributing units, that is, units allowing their faculty to teach in other units.

For consideration in the pilot, faculty must submit a proposal containing:

- A proposed course syllabus developed in collaboration with a faculty member in another unit. The syllabus must involve both instructors in all classes for the entirety of the course. Thus, it must be a true collaboration for the entire term and not a joint effort with part-time support from each individual.
- A one page cover memo attached to the syllabus making a case for: (1) why this course furthers the intellectual collaboration you deem important; (2) how this instructional approach and course enhances student learning; and (3) how this course improves the curriculum. The course, with the approval of JCAP, could be cross-listed across academic units or be listed in only one unit. Proposals should indicate the preferred listing.
- A memorandum of approval from the unit directors/chairs of the two units. With this approval, the contributing unit agrees to accept \$3,500 from the Office of the Provost in lieu of one regular course that would have been offered in the home department/division. The responsibility to meet overall course obligations remains that of the head of the unit and, for this reason, some proposals may not be possible to be sponsored during the pilot phase.

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The proposal package (syllabus, cover memo, approval from unit directors/chairs) must be submitted to the Dean(s) by August 15, 2009. The Dean(s) will in turn submit the proposal with notice of approval to the relevant Vice Provost by August 22, 2009 for consideration.

Applications for undergraduate courses are to be sent to Vice Provost Phyllis Peres for review and approval. Graduate course applications should be sent to Vice Provost Rosemary Wander. Approval or denial of completed proposals will be made by the relevant Vice Provost based on merit and resources available. Questions regarding this program should be directed to provost@american.edu.

Finally, in response to the aforementioned problem regarding course evaluation forms, we have arranged with the Office of the Registrar to have course evaluation forms available for both instructors in a team taught course.

We hope this provides some additional flexibility and a chance for creative initiatives next year. Should faculty members find the program successful, we can explore possible continuation in AY 2010-2011.